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Farm Broadcasters Letter



Letter No. 2224

August 8, 1985

BLOCK TO
USSR

Sec'y of Agriculture John Block will travel to the Soviet Union and Hungary to discuss trade and other agricultural matters. He is scheduled to leave Washington, D.C., Aug. 25 and return Sept. 3. He will meet with Minister of Agriculture Valentin K. Mesyats, in response to an invitation extended last Nov. by Mesyats while visiting the U.S.

CCC RATES:
7-3/4 PCT.

Commodity loans disbursed in Aug. by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation carry a 7-3/4 pct. interest rate, down from 7-7/8 pct.

MILK PRICE
SUPPORT

In compliance with current law, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is publishing a proposal to increase the support price of milk to 75 pct. of parity effective Oct. 1, 1985. This price is projected to be \$16.22 per hundredweight for manufacturing milk of national average milkfat content 3.67, an increase of \$4.62 from the present level of \$11.60 per hundredweight. While the proposal will not be implemented if new price support legislation is enacted effective Oct. 1, 1985, current law states the proposal must be published. This proposal was published in the Aug. 1 Federal Register. (Send written comments to be received by Sept. 16 to: Director, Commodity Analysis Division, ASCS, USDA, 3741 So. Bldg., P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013.)

DEMANDS FOR
FARM MACHINERY

U.S. farmers are expected to buy \$6.4 to \$6.6 billion worth of new and used farm machinery this year, compared with \$7.3 billion in 1984, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The estimate is down significantly from the Feb. projection, primarily because of the continued weak farm economy. The domestic farm machinery outlook for 1986 calls for continued declines in farm machinery expenditures.

U.S. CORN
VS. CANADIAN
HOGS

After reviewing complaints from U.S. hog producers, the U.S. recently enacted a countervailing duty tied to Canadian subsidies according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Now the Ontario Corn Producers Assoc. (OCPA) has announced it will study U.S. policies that may directly and indirectly subsidize corn, and the possibility that aflatoxin-contaminated U.S. corn might enter Canada. The OCPA says that as long as barriers against Canadian hog exports to the U.S. continue, Canada may restrict imports of U.S. corn, which have averaged 700,000 tons annually over the past five years.

FARM INPUTS:
ENERGY

Farm prices of gasoline, diesel, and LP gas during 1985 are expected to remain stable or decline slightly from a year earlier, while natural gas and electricity prices probably will increase, but by less than the rate of inflation, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Energy expenditures dropped from \$9.6 billion in 1983 to \$9.2 billion in 1984, and are likely to decline further this year largely due to farmers' continued efforts to conserve energy. The Environmental Protection Agency is surveying farm and nonfarm businesses to determine the number of leaking underground tanks, and plans to issue standards and guidelines for new underground tanks by Feb. 1987.

FARM
MACHINERY
TRADE

The international U.S. farm machinery trade balance was \$6.5 million in first-quarter 1985, down dramatically from \$90 million in first-quarter 1984 and \$506 million during calendar 1984. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, export markets are weakening while imports are rising steadily. The domestic farm machinery industry is having and increasing share of its total output produced overseas, due to lower labor and material costs and the high value of the U.S. dollar.

IRRIGATION
WATER

During 1974-83, land irrigated with on-farm pumped water increased 9.5 million acres to 44.6 million, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Meantime, pumping expenditures rose from \$551 million to \$2.5 billion, due to the rise in irrigated acres and sharply higher energy prices. Groundwater accounted for nearly 80 pct. of the water applied to the newly irrigated acreage. The Environmental Protection Agency has proposed criteria and procedures for a new pesticide review process called the Special Review, and is initiating an extensive national survey of pesticides in groundwater.

FOOD
SPENDING
1980-81

Americans spent an average of \$20.03 per week on food in 1981, compared with \$18.95 in 1980, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Married couples with children spent less per person on food eaten both at home and away from home. Single-parent households headed by men spent more per person than those headed by women. Residents of the Northeast spent the most per person on food at home. Westerners spend the most on food away from home. (For additional information, call David Smallwood or James Blaylock, 202-447-9200.)

JSDA
EMERGENCY
LOANS

Sec'y of Agriculture John Block named 6 primary and 14 contiguous counties in Washington as eligible for Farmers Home Admin. emergency loans because of losses of fruit crops due to freezing temperatures. Fruit growers in all 20 counties have eight months in which to apply for the loans to cover part of their actual losses.

LOWERING SALT
IN PROCESSED
FOODS

Corned beef, hotdogs and baked goods could be made with less salt, still taste as good, and help people cut the salt in the diets, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These foods are the source of over 30 pct. of an American's intake of sodium. Research shows proper refrigeration is more important than salt in retarding the growth of microbes that cause spoilage and food poisoning. (For more info., contact Richard Whiting or Eugene Guy, Agri. Res. Service, USDA, Philadelphia, Pa. 19118. Phone: 215-233-6437.)

FROM OUR
TELEVISION
SERVICE

1985 FARM BILL...Secretary of Agriculture John Block focuses on some of the issues in the proposed farm bill, including commodity programs and what it means to farmers. Jim Johnson interviews. (441)

1985 FARM BILL - EXPORTS...Secretary of Agriculture John Block continues his discussion on the proposed farm bill and what the Department must do to increase exports of agricultural commodities and products. Jim Johnson interviews. (442)

LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY OUTLOOK...USDA economist Leland Southard talks about the current developments in the livestock and poultry industries, and how these changes will affect farmers and agriculture. Vic Powell interviews. (443)

INCREASING U.S. SALES TO FRANCE...USDA agricultural attache Phil Letarte talks about the agricultural products we export to France, and offers tips to U.S. exporters. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (444)

ALABAMA COMPUTER INSTRUCTION...Rob Martin and Jim Novak, Auburn State University, talk about the type of information and instruction offered to farmers on computers. Vic Powell interviews. (445)

RECORD
TEXTILE
IMPORTS

U.S. textile imports set another record last year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Cotton textile imports accounted for 37 pct. of the total amount of cotton used in consumer goods sold in the U.S. The amount of cotton in imports was equivalent to just over 3 million bales of domestically produced cotton. Two years ago, imports represented 29 pct., the equivalent of almost 2 million bales. Most U.S. cotton textile imports originate in countries that purchase little or no raw U.S. cotton. Major suppliers of cotton textiles to the U.S. are Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Korea, Pakistan, India, countries of the Western Hemisphere, and Western Europe.

COTTON
MEETING

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will hold a conference on high volume instrument (HVI) measurement of cotton fiber properties on Tues., Sept. 10 in Fort Mill, S.C. The conference will provide a forum for the exchange of information on the use of HVI systems. The program will include speakers from the cotton industry, academia and government. The meeting is open to the public and will start at 9 a.m. at the Holiday Inn-Carowinds Motel near Charlotte, N.C. airport. For more information, contact H. H. Ramey, USDA, AMS, Cotton Division, Wash., D.C. 20250. Phone: 202-447-2167.

BAAA BLUE

The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture researchers have had 100 pct. success in tests of two experimental vaccines to protect sheep against costly bluetongue disease. Further tests will be made to confirm the initial success in sheep. Vaccines could be available in five to six years. Bluetongue is spread by flying gnats that bite cattle, the main carriers of the virus, and then attack sheep. No vaccine is available to protect cattle against the disease. (For details, contact Charles Campbell, microbiologist, Plum Island Animal Disease Center, USDA, Greenport, N.Y. 11944. Phone: 516-323-2500.)

OFF MIKE

Let's start with judging this week. Farm broadcasters are always being asked to judge this and that, and sometimes put themselves in a real position of jeopardy. For instance who, besides an obstetrician, would willing be a baby judge? (A smart obstetrician found the perfect answer for new mothers who wanted to know what he thought of their new babies: He'd exclaim, "Now there is a baby!" and satisfy them every time.) Well, Karr Ingham (KGNC, Amarillo, TX) became a baby judge recently, along with some other media types. It happened in the Texas Panhandle on July 4th, and Karr says he honestly doesn't remember how many babies were in the contest...just a "bunch of 'em." he survived, from the report we received ... Another judging effort involves cabbritto, and if you're like me, you're ignorant when it comes to cabbritto. Jim Stewart (KFYO, Lubbock, TX) straightened me out (and it's his spelling of the word, because we couldn't find the word in either of our dictionaries). It's goat meat, and Jim and Roddy Peeples (VSA, San Angelo, TX) will be judging the World Championship Cabritto Cookoff contest Labor Day in Brady, TX. Roddy's been judging the event ever since it started 12-13 years ago and Jim for the past 9 years. Jim says he takes some tamales along...just in case ... Incidentally, Jim reports that his son Blair Stewart, a sophomore at Texas Tech in Lubbock, Placed 3rd in the radio category of the Ag Communicators of Tomorrow national competition. Our congratualtions! ... Bob Azelton, former farm director at KFEQ, St. Joseph, MO, died suddenly of a heart attack, August 5. he went to KFEQ in 1976 and left in 1980 to go into banking. He was president of a bank in Clinton, MO, at the time of his death ... Mark Kanz is no longer at WOSH, Oshkosh, WI. Dan Tripp is the new farm director at the station.

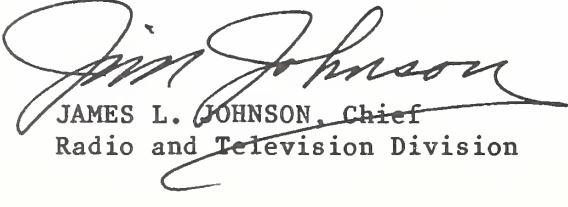
FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1471...(Weekly 13½ min documentary) Barges were once the backbone of the farm transportation system. But over the years the barge industry has started to lose some of it's dominance. George Holmes discusses the situation with Buzz Fitzpatrick, Director of USDA's Office of Transportation, USDA Economist Mike Harris, USDA Historian Wayne Rasmussen, and Jeff Smith, American Waterways Operators.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1460...(Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; Expected farm credit crunch; Farm crisis affecting national economy; Dairy deadline nears.

CONSUMER TIME #953...(Weekly reel of five 2½-3 min features) A national eating binge; Identifying poison plants; Kids and household chores; Cleaning suede, leather or fur; How to get'em down on the farm.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Tues, Aug. 13, Weekly crop and weather report; Wed, Aug. 14, Vegetables; Thurs, Aug. 15, Foreign ag trade of U.S. milk production; Fri, Aug. 16, Feed; Mon, Aug. 19, Agricultural outlook. Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.


JAMES L. JOHNSON, Chief
Radio and Television Division